

Appl. No. 10/643,394
Reply to Office Action of August 22, 2006

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

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Support for the amendment can be found in the description of prepared embodiments regarding the side chains, on page 15, lines 10 to 15 of the specification.

The claims are provisionally rejected as obvious double patenting over a number of related copending applications because of the broad scope of the claims. Reconsideration in view of the restricted claim scope now presented, is requested.

The claims are also rejected as obvious over Maeda (USP 6,562,441).

The Examiner states that, in item 3 on page 3 of the office action, "The hydrophilic polymer may have side chains introduced by graft polymerization (col. 7, line 66 to col. 8, line 30)".

Although above description pointed out by the Examiner shows a possibility of introducing some functional groups to the side chains, it does not disclose a hydrophilic polymer compound having a photosensitive group as modifying group capable of constituting the side chain. In other words, Maeda et al. does not shows the side, chains constituted by a modifying group selected from the groups of photo-dimerizable type,

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photo-decomposable type, photo-polymerizable type,
photo-modifying type and photo-dimerizable type.

The reason why Maeda et al. does not show the side chains of the invention is explained by the descriptions of Maeda et al. itself. Maeda et al. says "the term "hydrogel" indicates a polymer having a three-dimensional network constitution, being swollen with a solvent mainly comprising water and having no flowability. Because electron beam crosslinking reaction in the present invention is initiated mainly by the pulling of hydrogen, non-specified functional group is crosslinked (see col. 8, lines 30-36)".

It is therefore submitted that the crosslinking process of Maeda et al. differs from the present invention thereof. Furthermore Maeda et al. does not show the specific hydrophilic polymer compound which has the side chains constituted by a modifying group selected from the groups of photo-dimerizable type, photo-decomposable type, photo-polymerizable type, photo-modifying type and photo-dimerizable type, as now required in the claims.

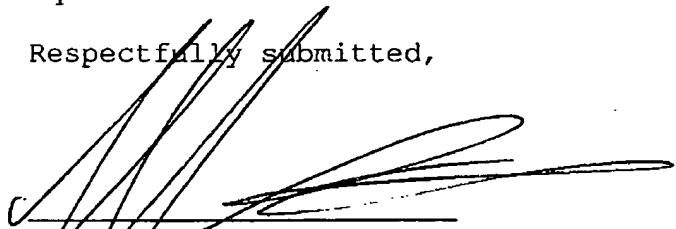
It is therefore submitted that Maeda does not show the present invention and, in view of the technical differences noted above, does not render the present invention obvious by any obvious modification of the art.

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Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the
application are respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,



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